

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY
M E D I C A L E X A M I N E R D E P A R T M E N T
NUMBER 1 ON BOB HOPE RD MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136 (305) 545-9400
INVESTIGATION REPORT

M.E. CASE NO. 88-1055 A
DATE APR/02/88

GRAYS, SHARMANITA (REMAINS, UNKNOWN)
16 BLACK FEMALE DOB OCT/11/71
855 N.W. 7TH AVENUE MIAMI, FLORIDA

PLACE OF DEATH: 3530 BISCAYNE BLVD. MIAMI, FLORIDA
TIME OF DEATH: FOUND 12:50AM APR/02/88

INVESTIGATING AGENCY: MIAMI #0931053-M/DET. SCHILDBACK

INCIDENT LOCATION: 3530 BISCAYNE BLVD. MIAMI, FLORIDA
APR/01/88 UNK. SCENE M.E.

HISTORY:

SRR

ACCORDING TO THE INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION: ON APRIL 2, 1988, ABT. 12:50A.M., THE MAINTANENCE MAN AT BAYPOINT MOTEL FOUND THE DECEASED UNRESPONSIVE, LYING NUDE NEAR THE OUTSIDE STAIRCASE. HE CALLED FIRE RESCUE AND UPON THEIR ARRIVAL, SHE WAS FOUND EXPIRED. POLICE RESPONDED, WENT TO THE ROOM WHERE SHE AN A MALE ACQUAINTANCE WERE BOARDING. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE BOTH OF THEM WERE SMOKING AND SNORTING COCAINE ABT. 4 HOURS PRIOR. HE ALSO STATED THAT SHE LEFT THE ROOM AND NEVER RETURNED.

SHE WAS FOUND LYING ON HER STOMACH FACING UPWARD ON THE STAIRCASE AND HER HEAD THROWN BACK. HER CLOTHING WERE FOUND INSIDE A PURSE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRCASE.

POSITIVE AND LEGAL IDENTIFICATION WAS MADE BY VIEWING OF A PHOTOGRAPH.

CAUSE OF DEATH: ASPHYXIA. AMENDED BY J. H. DAVIS, M. D., CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER
6/19/89-DJM.

MANNER: HOMICIDE DATE AUTOPSY APR/02/88 BY JAN C. GARAVAGLIA, M.D.

MORTUARY: POITIER

SRR

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY
M E D I C A L E X A M I N E R D E P A R T M E N T
NUMBER 1 ON BOB HOPE RD MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136 (305) 545-2410
INVESTIGATION REPORT

M.E. CASE NO. 88-1055 A
DATE APR/02/88

GRAYS, SHARMANITA (REMAINS, UNKNOWN)
16 BLACK FEMALE DOB OCT/11/71
855 N.W. 7TH AVENUE MIAMI, FLORIDA

PLACE OF DEATH: 3530 BISCAYNE BLVD. MIAMI, FLORIDA
TIME OF DEATH: FOUND 12:50AM APR/02/88

INVESTIGATING AGENCY: MIAMI #0931053-M/DET. SCHILDBACK

INCIDENT LOCATION: 3530 BISCAYNE BLVD. MIAMI, FLORIDA
APR/01/88 ~~8:00P~~ *unk* SCENE M.E.

HISTORY:

SRR

ACCORDING TO THE INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION: ON APRIL 2, 1988, ABT. 12:50P.M., THE MAINTANENCE MAN AT BAYPOINT MOTEL FOUND THE DECEASED UNRESPONSIVE, LYING NUDE NEAR THE OUTSIDE STAIRCASE. HE CALLED FIRE RESCUE AND UPON THEIR ARRIVAL, SHE WAS FOUND EXPIRED. POLICE RESPONDED, WENT TO THE ROOM WHERE SHE AN A MALE ACQUAINTANCE WERE BOARDING. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE BOTH OF THEM WERE SMOKING AND SNORTING COCAINE ABT. 4 HOURS PRIOR. HE ALSO STATED THAT SHE LEFT THE ROOM AND NEVER RETURNED.

SHE WAS FOUND LYING ON HER STOMACH FACING UPWARD ON THE STAIRCASE AND HER HEAD THROWN BACK. HER CLOTHING WERE FOUND INSIDE A PURSE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRCASE.

POSITIVE AND LEGAL IDENTIFICATION WAS MADE BY VIEWING OF A PHOTOGRAPH.

CAUSE OF DEATH: COCAINE INTOXICATION. REFILED: 6/2/88-DJM.

MANNER: ACCIDENT DATE AUTOPSY APR/02/88 BY JAN C. GARAVAGLIA, M.D.

MORTUARY: POITIER

SRR

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT

CLASSIFICATION OF PENDING CASE

(THIS FORM IS TO BE USED BY A MEDICAL EXAMINER WHEN A PENDING CASE IS TO BE CLASSIFIED. MAKE CERTAIN THAT THERE IS AN APPROVAL BY EITHER THE CHIEF OR DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER BEFORE COMPLETING THE NECESSARY FORMS AND CERTIFICATES REQUIRED BY THE STATE.)

M.E. Case # 88-1055 Name (If known) GRAYS, SHARMANITA

Cause of Death: Cocaine Intoxication
(Item 24)

Due to:

Due to:

Contributory Cause:

Manner of Death: accident
(Item 27a)

How Incident Occurred: did ingest cocaine
(Item 27d)

Rationale for Classification: The deed is a 16 B.F. who is known to be a prostitute. She was known to be smoking cocaine with a man in his hotel room. She was seen in his hotel room ^(Does not know if dead or alive) by a maintenance worker at about 10pm. The man in the hotel room states the deed left his room to buy more cocaine. The deed was first seen out on the staircase in the back of the hotel about 11pm again by a maintenance worker. This was not reported to the police until approx 1 AM.

The deed was found naked, prone, on the stairs with her legs spread apart and her clothes in her purse at the bottom of the stairs. Her neck was ... (over)

Jan C. Saravoglia M.D.
Medical Examiner

May 23-88
M D Y
Date

Approved by [Signature]
6 1 88
M D Y
Date

hyperextended against gravity and her elbows were resting on the stairs. She had no signs of trauma or struggle but ~~did~~ have a bite mark on her lower lip. She had blood around her anus and a laceration to the anal mucosa. acid phosphatase was neg (oral, vaginal & rectal)

autopsy revealed a few petechia in the conjunctive ~~as~~ as well as the mucosa of the larynx.

There was no extravasated blood in the neck muscle (anterior or posterior) no anatomic cause of death was found.

Toxicology

Volatiles neg

cocaine $< .05 \text{ mg/L}$

Serum Benzoylcegonine $.06 \text{ mg/L}$

The brain was positive for cocaine ($.012 \text{ mg/kg}$)

The case was initially investigated per M.E. request as a possible homicide. after investigation the city of M. police have no evidence of homicide. The preponderance of evidence indicates that this is a cocaine related death of a prostitute probably during sex.

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY
M E D I C A L E X A M I N E R D E P A R T M E N T
1050 N.W. 19TH STREET MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136 (305) 549-7337
INVESTIGATION REPORT

M.E. CASE NO. 88-1055 A
DATE APR/02/88

GRAYS, SHARMANITA (REMAINS, UNKNOWN)
16 BLACK FEMALE DOB OCT/11/71
855 N.W. 7TH AVENUE MIAMI, FLORIDA

PLACE OF DEATH: 3530 BISCAYNE BLVD. MIAMI, FLORIDA
TIME OF DEATH: FOUND 12:50AM APR/02/88

INVESTIGATING AGENCY: MIAMI #0931053-M/DET. SCHILDBACK

INCIDENT LOCATION: 3530 BISCAYNE BLVD. MIAMI, FLORIDA
SCENE M.E.

HISTORY:

SRR

ACCORDING TO THE INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION: ON APRIL 2, 1988, ABT. 12:50P.M., THE MAINTANENCE MAN AT BAYPOINT MOTEL FOUND THE DECEASED UNRESPONSIVE, LYING NUDE NEAR THE OUTSIDE STAIRCASE. HE CALLED FIRE RESCUE AND UPON THEIR ARRIVAL, SHE WAS FOUND EXPIRED. POLICE RESPONDED, WENT TO THE ROOM WHERE SHE AN A MALE ACQUAINTANCE WERE BOARDING. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE BOTH OF THEM WERE SMOKING AND SNORTING COCAINE ABT. 4 HOURS PRIOR. HE ALSO STATED THAT SHE LEFT THE ROOM AND NEVER RETURNED.

SHE WAS FOUND LYING ON HER STOMACH FACING UPWARD ON THE STAIRCASE AND HER HEAD THROWN BACK. HER CLOTHING WERE FOUND INSIDE A PURSE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRCASE.

POSITIVE AND LEGAL IDENTIFICATION WAS MADE BY VIEWING OF A PHOTOGRAPH.

CAUSE OF DEATH: PENDING FURTHER INVESTIGATION.

MANNER: UNCLASSIFIED DATE AUTOPSY APR/02/88 BY JAN C. GARAVAGLIA, M.D.

MORTUARY: POITIER

SRR

M.E. Case No. #88-1055

_____ on April 2, 1988 at 8:30A.M.
Mon Day Yr.

as that of SHARMANITA GRAYS

FDL#252-165-42-022

SRR

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 4/2/88
mo. day yr.

8:30^{PM}
time

88-1055
M.E. Case #

RE: REMAINS, UNKNOWN

LEGAL AND POSITIVE I.D. MADE BY:

DAN Eugene Washington
4501 N.W. 3RD Ave.
Miami, FLA. 33127
Tel. # 576-0794

Friend X 5 YRS.

FDL # W252-165-42-022



DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE mo. day yr.

 time

 M.E. Case #

Spoke c Det. Schildbach

Wanted to know if we have finished
toxicology yet

new Facts

- was seen at about 10 or 11 in bed by a
maiden (?) person from the hotel. He could
not say that she was ^{for sure} alive. He clothes were on a chair in the room.
- a latin girl was in the same hotel room when
the dec'd & a man (as well as the latin girl)
were smoking crack. she states she
left her about 8 or 9:00 pm. Some
saw the dec'd go into another room ~ 9:00 pm
- The dec'd was first seen out on the staircase
by someone who worked at the hotel at
about 11 pm. It was not reported to
the police till about 1 AM.
- the man in the room with her has been
arrested for rape in the past
- a cocaine overdose occurred in the same room

this past weekend April 23-~~24~~ Ray Shepard. It is
not felt to be related to this case.

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY
Office of the Medical Examiner
INVESTIGATION REPORT

Police Case No. #09310534
Age 38 Race B Sex F

NAME OF THE DECEASED: JANE DOE

Address _____ Date of Birth _____

Social Security No. _____ Occupation _____ Employer _____

Place of Death 3530 BISCAYNE BLVD. (BAY POINT MOTEL)

Death Occurred _____ 19____ M. in the presence of _____

Found Dead 4-2 1988 0050 P.M. by LORENZO HARRISON

Identified by _____ Address _____

Date/Time Viewed by Investigator 4/2-1988/125 A.M. Medical Examiner at Scene DR. GARAVIGLIA

HISTORY: (What happened just prior to death and when was victim last seen alive?) Mr. Harrison, a

maintenance man at the motel found the victim lying
nude on the rear outside staircase. Rescue responded
no vitals. Contacted a guest at the motel, who stated
he and the victim had smoked and snorted cocaine about
four (4) days earlier. The left and right trousers
clothing found in a purse at bottom of staircase.

Possible manner of death UNCLASSIFIED

If Violent Death: Date/Time of Incident _____ 19____ M. Weapon/Cal. _____

Exact Location/Address of Incident ON REAR STAIRCASE (OUTSIDE) At work _____
(Specify Street, Parking Lot, Bar etc.) BAY POINT MOTEL

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION: Clothing NUDE

Position/Location of Body: LYING ON STOMACH, FACING UPWARD ON STAIRCASE
HEAD THROWN BACK

Lividity: Yes ☒ No ☐ Consistent ☐ Body Heat: Warm: ☐ Cool ☐ Cold ☒

Rigor Mortis: None ☐ Slight ☐ Full ☒ Decomposition: None ☒ Slight ☐ Advanced ☐

Trauma: Yes ☐ No ☒ Describe _____

NAMES OF DOCTORS/HOSPITALS who attended deceased during life: _____

NAME OF NEXT OF KIN: UNK. AT THIS TIME Relation _____

Address _____ Telephone _____ Notified: Yes ☐ No ☐

Valuables and Disposition NONE Medication to M.E.: Yes ☐ No ☒

Investigating Agency OL-MIA Report Submitted by Det. R. H. Hildbrand Date: 4/2 1988 200 P.M.

CASE NUMBER _____

MEDICAL EXAMINER

DADE COUNTY
1050 N.W. 19th Street
Miami, Florida 33136

CASE INFORMATION

INVESTIGATION,

6:10 AM
4/2/88

- RECEIVED CALL FROM M.P.D.

REFERENCE # 88-1055

M.P.D. HAS NOTIFIED THE NEXT
OF KIN WITH REGARD TO THIS CASE.

FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED
TO CONTACT THIS OFFICE IN THE
MORNING

JB

Include Date, Time and Source of Each Entry

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 4/2/88
mo. day yr.

8:30^{Am}
time

88-1055
M.E. Case #

RE: REMAINS, UNKNOWN

LEGAL & POSITIVE I.D. MADE BY

VIEWING OF PHOTOGRAPHS UNDER NAME OF:

SHARMANITA GRAYS (16 YRS OF AGE)
855 N.W. 7th AVE.

MIAMI, FLA.

TEL # 579-0072

NOK: LULA GRAYS (mother)

855 N.W. 7th AVE.

MIAMI, FLA.

579-0072

(NOTIFIED)



DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE April - 2 - 1988
mo. day yr.

time

88-1055
M.E. Case #

COD: Pending further
investigation

J. C. L.

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 4/4/88
mo. day yr.

7:05 A
time

88-1055
M.E. Case #

Re: Trays, Sharmanita

called Mr. Washington (friend)
reference funeral arrangements.

He was not in, message was left to have him
call this office about arrangements.

@staple

7:50 A

(579-0072 Mother)

Received call from Mr. Washington 7:50 A
family will be making arrangements
today.

@staple

MEDICAL EXAMINERS DEPARTMENT
1050 N.W. 19 STREET
MIAMI, FLORIDA

CRIME SCENE SEARCH DETAIL

POLICE AGENCY City of Miami

MEDICAL EXAMINER CASE # 88-1055 DATE 04/02/88
POLICE (AGENCY) CASE # 0931053-M TIME 4:50 AM
NAME OF DECEASED Unknown B/F

FOLLOW-UP PROCESSING COMPLETED:

(X) FINGERPRINTING () BLOOD STANDARD
(X) PALM PRINTING () NEUTRON ACTIVATION
() FINGERNAIL SCRAPINGS () CLOTHING
() HAIR STANDARD COLLECTION () PHOTOGRAPH

() OTHER _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Picked up one copy of fingerprints for ID verification.

Sgt Jc Kalene
ID TECHNICIAN / OFFICER

POSITIVE ID BY FINGERPRINTS MADE ON _____
UNDER THE NAME OF _____
LAST KNOWN ADDRESS _____
DOB _____ OTHER _____

CALLED BY _____

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
CITY OF MIAMI, FLORIDA

FILE COPY

PROPERTY RECEIPT

PROPERTY UNIT

RUN DATE 4/04/88

ME# 88-1055

RECEIPT NUMBER C84270DATE ENTERED 4/04/88 CASE NUMBER 0931053M NUMBER PACKAGES _____OFFICER I.D. 6301 SCHILDBACH, BERNARD PERSON CRIME HOMICIDEOFFENSE 01 HOMICIDELOCATION 3530 BISC BLVD.

ITEM	EFP	QUANTITY	UNITS	CATEGORY	BRAND	MODEL	COLOR	STATUS	STORED
01	E	1.00	EA	MIMISC				0	R
SEALED RAPE KIT									

Received the above article	Address	Date	Time

OUT TO:		RECEIVED BY: (NAME, IBM)		DATE:	TIME:
ITEM NO.	WEIGHT OUT:	NUMBER AND TYPE OF PACKAGES:		CLERK:	IBM:
RETURNED BY: (NAME, IBM)				DATE:	TIME:
ITEM NO.	WEIGHT IN:	NUMBER AND TYPE OF PACKAGES:		CLERK:	IBM:

OFFICER _____ PROPERTY SPECIALIST _____

DEFENDANT _____ OWNER _____

OWNERS ADDRESS _____

RETURN TO OWNER _____ CONFISCATE _____ DATE _____

SIGNATURE

SIGNATURE

REMARKS _____

POITIER FUNERAL HOME, INC.

2300 NORTHWEST 62ND STREET
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33147
(305) 638-5030 OR 638-5031

BERNARD C. POITIER, SR. - ALFONSO M. RICHARDSON, SR.
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

AUTHORIZATION

M.F.

I hereby designate the above-named funeral establishment to take charge of funeral arrangements for: SHARMAITA GRAYS,

and I authorize the release and removal of the remains to said funeral establishment for the purpose of embalming.

I represent that I am the next of kin, or am acting as an authorized agent for the next of kin.

Signed: Lula Mae Gray
Relationship: MOTHER

Co-Signed: _____
Relationship: _____

WITNESS: Chice Jones DATE: 4-4-88

FOR VERBAL (TELEPHONE) AUTHORIZATION:

Authorization from _____
Relationship _____
Date _____ Time _____ Received by _____

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER
MIAMI, FLORIDA

DECEASED'S VALUABLES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY RECORD

NAME OF DECEASED UNK M.E. CASE NO. 88-1055
TIME 4:15 AM DATE 04/02/88
AGE _____ RACE B SEX F HEIGHT 5'7"
WEIGHT (with clothes) _____ (without clothes) 135 (with wet clothes) _____
FINGERPRINTED: YES _____ NO _____

MALE

CLOTHES

FEMALE

SHOES _____ SOCKS _____ SHOES _____ STOCKINGS _____ SOCKS _____
JACKET _____ SWEATER _____ COAT _____ SWEATER _____ JACKET _____
TIE _____ SHIRT _____ DRESS _____ BLOUSE _____ SKIRT _____
TROUSERS _____ SHORTS _____ BELT _____ SHORTS _____ SLACKS _____
UNDERSHIRT _____ T SHIRT _____ UNDERSHORTS _____ SLIP _____ PANTIES NONE CORSET _____ BRA _____
PAJAMAS _____ PAJAMAS _____ GOWN _____
DENTURES: U. _____ L. _____ TRUSS _____ DENTURES: U. _____ L. _____
MISCELLANEOUS _____ MISCELLANEOUS _____

VALUABLES

(List all money, jewelry, keys, personal papers & other valuables)

-NONE-

RECEIVED BY D. Benning MORGUE ATTENDANT WITNESS Carol L. [Signature]

REMOVED FROM M.E. OFFICE BY

BODY A. [Signature] REPRESENTING POITIER DATE 4-4-88 TIME 1:55 PM

CLOTHES _____ REPRESENTING _____ DATE _____ TIME _____

VALUABLES _____ REPRESENTING _____ DATE _____ TIME _____

QEV

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name....GRAYS,.Sharmanita.....Case No. 88-1055

SCENE INVESTIGATION

DATE: April 2, 1988

LOCATION: 3530 Biscayne Blvd. in rear
alley behind Baypoint Motel

TIME ARRIVED AT SCENE:

POLICE AGENCY: Miami Police Dept.

LEAD INVESTIGATOR: Detective Schilbach

INITIAL INFORMATION:

The deceased is reported to be a prostitute who was with a male staying at the motel on the evening of April 2. She was in the motel room with the male and a second prostitute. The male states that they were snorting as well as smoking cocaine. He gave the deceased \$25.00 to buy more cocaine at which time she left and never returned to the room. The deceased was found on the back stairs of the Baypoint Motel by the maintenance man at approximately 12:55 a.m. The Baypoint Motel is known to be an area where prostitutes frequent.

OBSERVATIONS OF SURROUNDINGS:

The deceased is in the back outdoor stairwell of the motel. The back gate leading to the stairwell is locked. The deceased's purse is at the bottom of the stairwell and off to the side and it contains her clothing. A pair of panties are present at the top of the stairwell.


OBSERVATIONS OF VICTIM(s):

The victim is a young black female with her legs spread apart in a prone position lying on top of the staircase with her head hyperextended. A small amount of blood was noted around the anal area but no other evidence of trauma was appreciated. Small scratches to the face were evident.

SCENE IMPRESSION (INCLUDING PROBABLE CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH):

Pending further investigation, the possibilities being homicide versus drug overdose.

NOTE: The foregoing is of a speculative nature and subject to modification pending additional information and investigation


Jan C. Garavaglia, M.D.
Associate Medical Examiner

To D. Mark file c Group 88 1055

TELEPHONE MESSAGE

No 001476

DATE CALL RECEIVED **5-15-89** TIME **4:05pm**

WHO CALLED **Shanna Libbe**

FIRM **M. Gerald**

CITY, STATE

PHONE **Off. 376-3443** AREA CODE

☒ RETURN CALL, DATE, TIME **Home 233-4696**

☐ WILL CALL AGAIN, DATE, TIME

CALL TAKEN **Mary**

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE RD.
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136

MESSAGE FOR **JHD**

MESSAGE

17 deaths

5/17/89 - 4:00 p.m.

She's going with a story tomorrow. Has new info - Suspect was out of jail at time of homicides.

She wants to know the exact time of some of the deaths.

DAY-TIMERS RE-ORDER No. 3214 - Printed in USA

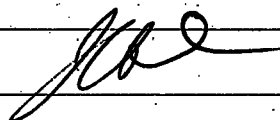
Re: **Sharmanta Grubbs**
Found **4/2/88** on stairs
She and Williams were together **4/1/88** -
all day. Then they went a hotel -
a Puerto Rican 9. The P.R. girl knocked
on door. Williams answers says Sharmanta
not there - gone out for cigarettes. She pounds
on door knowing he has cigarettes. She
gets motel clerk who looks in through window -
saw body covered in sheet on the bed -
not moving. Man was in room apparently.
Next thing the clerk knew she (victim)
found on stairs same position as in bed.
Police interviewed the man at the apartment

6/18/89

SS-105-8

To DMc

The time of injury is not 8:00 PM. It should
be unknown eg. "April 1, 1988 unknown" because
we have not yet received a formal report from
police as to what the witnesses said. The most
information we have came from a newspaper reporter.



DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT

CLASSIFICATION OF PENDING CASE

(THIS FORM IS TO BE USED BY A MEDICAL EXAMINER WHEN A PENDING CASE IS TO BE CLASSIFIED. MAKE CERTAIN THAT THERE IS AN APPROVAL BY EITHER THE CHIEF OR DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER BEFORE COMPLETING THE NECESSARY FORMS AND CERTIFICATES REQUIRED BY THE STATE.)

M.E. Case # 88-1055

Name (if known) Grays, Sharmenita

Cause of Death:
(Item 24)

~~Homicide by a~~
Asphyxia

Due to:

Due to:

Contributory Cause:

Manner of Death:
(Item 27a)

Homicide April 1, 1988 unknown time

How Incident Occurred:
(Item 27d)

Found dead with evidence of pressure on face and neck

Rationale for Classification:

1. Abandoned female (transported from room to stairway)
2. Nude
3. Evidence of stress - redol tears
4. Pressure marks on nose/mouth
5. petechiae eyes / subglottis / epiglottis
6. Fits epidemiological pattern of 19 case
7. Man with her lived above her warehouse
8. Scant cocaine $< .05$ mg/L

Medical Examiner

M - D - Y
Date

Approved by

JH Davis ME
6/18/89
M - D - Y
Date



RELEASE OF CASE MATERIALS

Date 01 - 23 - 90
Month Day Year

M.E. Case # 88-1055A Deceased Name Sharminita Gray

☐ Autopsy Report
☐ Slide Duplication / Photo
5 Pages
☐ Verification of Death
☐ Glass Micro Slides
☐ Micro Slide Case

Release to (Receiving Party Please Print):

Name Donna Gehlke

Address Herald

Signature of Receiving Party Donna Gehlke

Official Receipt # _____

Remarks:

Released By _____
Print Name

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE May - 5 - 1988
mo. day yr.

time

88-1055
M.E. Case #

Spoke with Terry Merritt
at Crime Lab.

she states the acid phosphatase
on the oral cavity, rectum & vagina
~~are~~ is all negative
No sperm on any slides.

D. C. Garavaglia M.D.

THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name...GRAYS,.Sharmanita...April.1,1988..10:00.a.m..Case No. 88-1055

CAUSE OF DEATH.

Cocaine Intoxication

*see
amendment
of H. Davis*

Jan C Garavaglia
Jan C. Garavaglia, M.D.
Associate Medical Examiner
Date: *June 9 1988*

JCG:rf

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY
MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
1050 N.W. 19th Street, Miami, Florida 33136

TOXICOLOGY REPORT

UNKNOWN

M.E. CASE NO. 88-1055

<u>SUBSTANCE</u>	<u>SPECIMEN</u>	<u>RESULT</u>
VOLATILES	HEART BLOOD	UNDETECTED
COCAINE	HEART BLOOD	<0.05 mg/L
COCAINE	NASAL SWAB	DETECTED
BENZOYLECGONINE	SERUM	0.06 mg/L


Jan C. Garavaglia, M.D.
Associate Medical Examiner

DATE April-21-1988



METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY
MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
1050 N.W. 19th Street, Miami, Florida 33136

TOXICOLOGY REPORT

GRAYS, SHARMANITA

M.E. CASE NO. 88-1055

ADDENDUM - 4/22/88:

SUBSTANCE

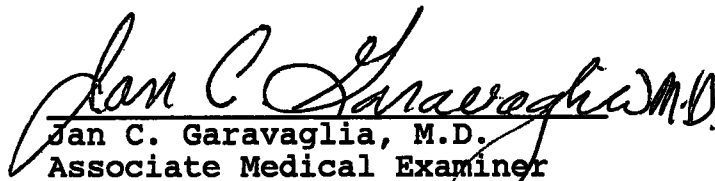
SPECIMEN

RESULT

COCAINE

BRAIN

0.12 mg/Kg


Jan C. Garavaglia, M.D.
Associate Medical Examiner

DATE May 27-1988



THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name...GRAYS,.Sharmanita...April.1,1988..10:00.a.m..Case No. 88-1055

IDENTIFICATION:

The body is identified by Dan Eugene Washington, 4501 NW 3rd Avenue, Miami, 576-0794, a friend of five years.

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION:

The body is that of a well developed, well nourished black female, 5 feet 7 inches in length, 135 pounds, who appears slightly older than the given age of 16 years. The scalp is atraumatic. The scalp hair is of medium length, 2-1/2 to 1-1/2 inches, black, and in the normal distribution. The irides are brown, pupils are 3 millimeters and round bilaterally. Multiple fine petechiae are present within the inferior aspects of the conjunctivae bilaterally. The ear canals are without blood or exudate. The mouth contains tan mucoid material. The teeth are in good repair. The lips have pink lipstick on their surface. The mucosa of the right lower lip, lateral aspect, contains a 1/4 inch superficial tear. Over the lateral aspect of the upper lip are superficial linear scratch type abrasions and these extend just to the right of midline. There is a curvilinear scratch type abrasion over the nose. A small amount of dried white material is adhered to the lateral aspect of each side of the mouth and extending into the cheeks. The upper left side of the forehead has small superficial linear scratch type parallel abrasions which measure approximately 3/4 inch in length. The neck is without rigor mortis, there is no evidence of contusions. The upper extremities have no needle tracks, tattoos or other distinguishing features except for several small macules over the ventral aspect of the right upper arm. Over the dorsal aspect of the right arm is a 1/2 inch curvilinear healing scratch and over the dorsal aspect of the right wrist is a 1/4 x 1/4 inch superficial rectangular shaped abrasion. The fingernails and toenails are painted red. The abdomen is scaphoid with no abdominal scars. The lower extremities are symmetrical. There are numerous small superficial round scars over the right lateral aspect of the right lower leg. The scars are surrounded by areas of increased pigmentation. The external genitalia show a dilated vagina with tan, thick material. There are no lacerations or abrasions to the vaginal mucosa. The rectum is dilated. There is blood dried on the skin and a 1/4 inch laceration of the anus is evident on the right anterior aspect.

The breasts are pendulous and without palpable masses or nipple exudate.

INTERNAL EXAMINATION:

The pleural cavities bilaterally are without significant fluid or adhesions. The pericardial cavity contains approximately 20 milliliters of straw colored fluid and is without adhesions. The peritoneal cavity contains approximately 100 milliliters of sero-sanguineous fluid and has no adhesions.

THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name...GRAYS,.Sharmanita...April.1,1988..10:00.a.m..Case No. 88-1055

The musculature of the neck is without extravasated blood. The hyoid bone and thyroid cartilage are intact. The mucosa of the trachea and larynx have multiple areas of fine petechiae and one large petechia measuring approximately 3/16 x 3/16 inch. Petechiae are also evident on the epiglottis. The larynx, trachea and mainstem bronchi are all unremarkable externally. The mucosa of the tongue is intact and there is no extravasated blood within the musculature.

The 260 gram heart has a small amount of subepicardial fat. The coronary arteries have a right dominant distribution and are free from atherosclerosis. There are several small petechiae on the posterior wall of the left ventricle. The heart musculature is a uniform tan-brown except for areas of congestion in the posterior wall beneath the areas of epicardial petechiae. The heart valves are all thin, pliable and competent. The coronary orifices are in the normal location. The aorta follows a normal course and is without lacerations or atherosclerosis.

The right and left lungs weigh 410 and 380 grams respectively. The lungs are well aerated. The bronchi contain no foreign material or blood. The pulmonary arteries are without thrombi. The majority of the dependent portions of the lungs are maroon while the rest of the lungs are pink-tan in appearance. No focal lesions are present within the lung parenchyma.

The 1240 gram liver is intact with a sharp anterior edge. The parenchyma is brown with no focal abnormalities. The gallbladder is nondistended and contains no stones.

The 150 gram spleen is intact with a smooth slate gray capsule. The parenchyma is maroon with a normal follicular appearance.

The esophagus, stomach and intestines are all unremarkable externally and along their mucosal surfaces except for general duskiness of the serosal surface of the small intestines with extravasated blood within the lumen. This is diffuse with the entire small intestine. The stomach serosa and mucosa are unremarkable. The stomach contains approximately 150 milliliters of dark brown liquid material.

The right and left kidneys weigh 160 grams each. They have smooth brown cortical surfaces. The cortical to medullary ratio appears normal. The pyramids also appear normal. The renal pelves are nondilated and the ureters follow a normal course to the bladder. The bladder contains approximately 5 milliliters of thick opaque urine. The mucosa of the bladder is dusky.

THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name...GRAYS,.Sharmanita...April.1,1988..10:00.a.m..Case No. 88-1055

Sectioning the adrenal glands, pancreas and thyroid gland fails to disclose any abnormalities.

The uterus measures 7 centimeters in length. The cervical os is round and open. There is a small amount of tan mucoid material within the cervical os. The endometrial lining is smooth, tan to maroon, with no focal abnormalities. Each ovary measures 1-1/2 x 1 inch. The serosal surface of the uterus is remarkable for several petechiae and extravasated blood within the peritoneal reflection between the rectum and posterior uterus.


The galeal and subgaleal tissue including the skull are atraumatic. The 1230 gram brain is symmetrical with mildly congested leptomeningeal vessels. The cerebrospinal fluid is clear. The vessels at the base of the brain are in the normal distribution. Sectioning of the cerebral hemispheres fails to disclose any abnormalities. The cerebellum is likewise unremarkable externally and upon sectioning. The brain stem is without extravasated blood or softening.

Beneath the anterior cervical spine the spinal cord appears normal with no evidence of epidural or subdural blood. There is no extravasated blood within the bone of the anterior vertebrae. The musculature of the posterior neck is without extravasated blood.

Palpation of the upper cervical spine through the foramen magnum is unremarkable.

AUTOPSY FINDINGS:

1. Superficial tear of the lateral aspect of the lower lip
2. Bilateral conjunctival petechiae
3. Petechiae of the mucosa of the trachea and larynx
4. Rectal tear
5. Extravasated blood in peritoneal reflection between the rectum and posterior uterus


Jan C. Garavaglia, M.D.
Associate Medical Examiner

JCG:rf

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE April 7 1988
mo. day yr.

time

88-1055
M.E. Case #

Lung: vascular congestion, proteinaceous fluid
within alveoli as well
as red blood cells.

Kidney: Congestion

Heart: no inflammation, mild interstitial edema

Liver: sinusoidal congestion

Uterus: endometrial lining, dilated basal glands, no increased
inflammation or evidence of pregnancy

Brain: unremarkable

J. C. Garavito M.D.

Full body, female, anterior and posterior views.

Name _____

Autopsy No. 88-1055

Age _____ Race _____ Sex _____

Date 1 / 1

slight blue nas. can
brown
3mm RB
fine petechiae lower
conj

1mm parrot lip
slight furrowed
sup. scratch
abrasions

hair black
2 1/2 I

superficial
linear scratch type
abrasions
rt side
upper lip
curvature
over nose

pink lip stick

scar in mucosa
rt lower labial lip

teeth good repair

naevus

slight
bleed

nail
rod

anus
dilated
tumor

1/4
year in anal
mucosa

angiotomy of posterior septal
and myocardium

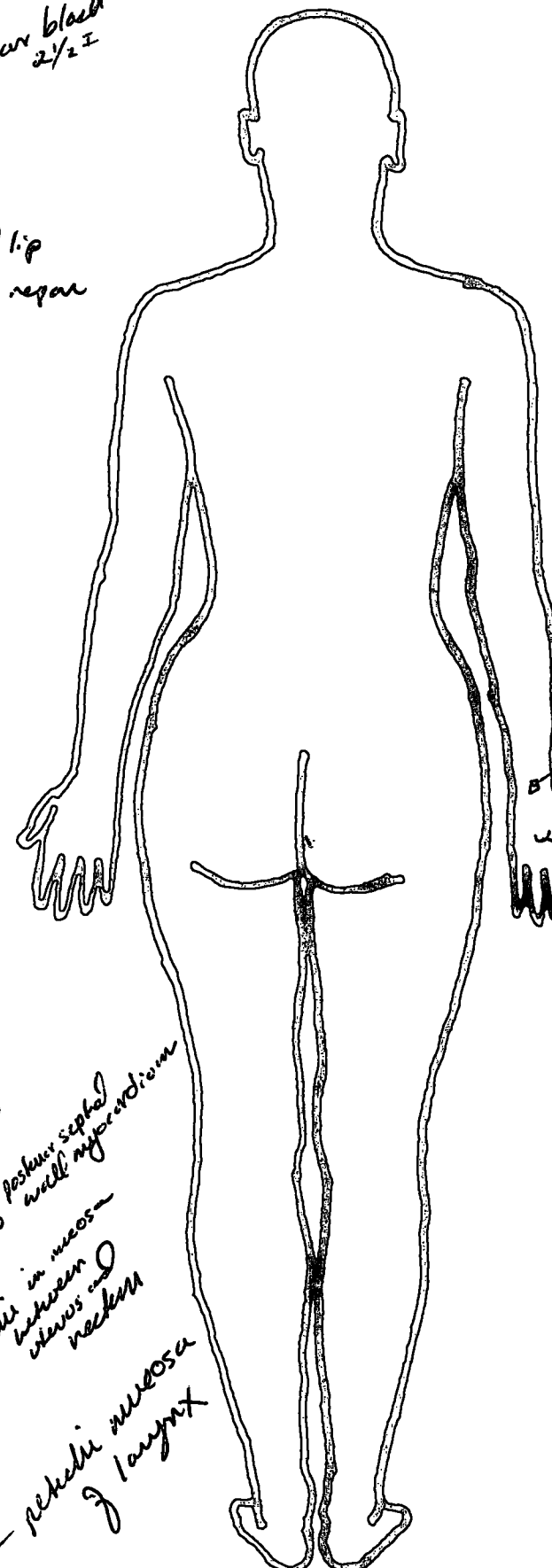
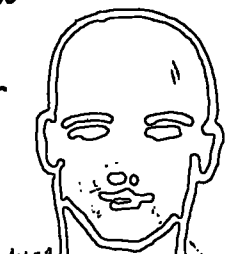
petechiae in mucosa
between
anus and
neck

petechiae mucosa
of larynx

sp. round
depression
surrounded
by +
pigmentary

1/4 x 1/4
diameter

1/2
curvature
leading
scratch

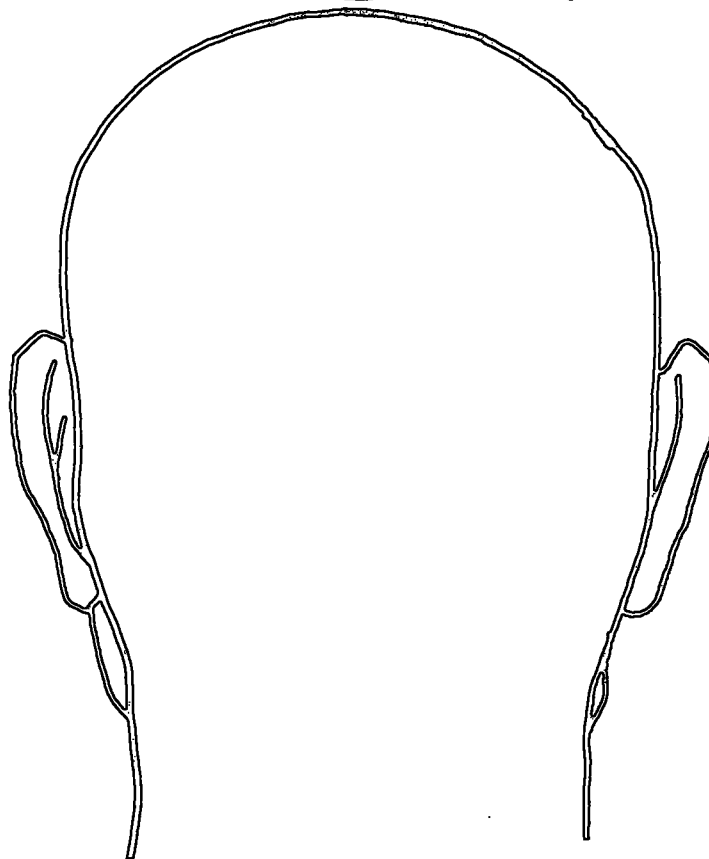
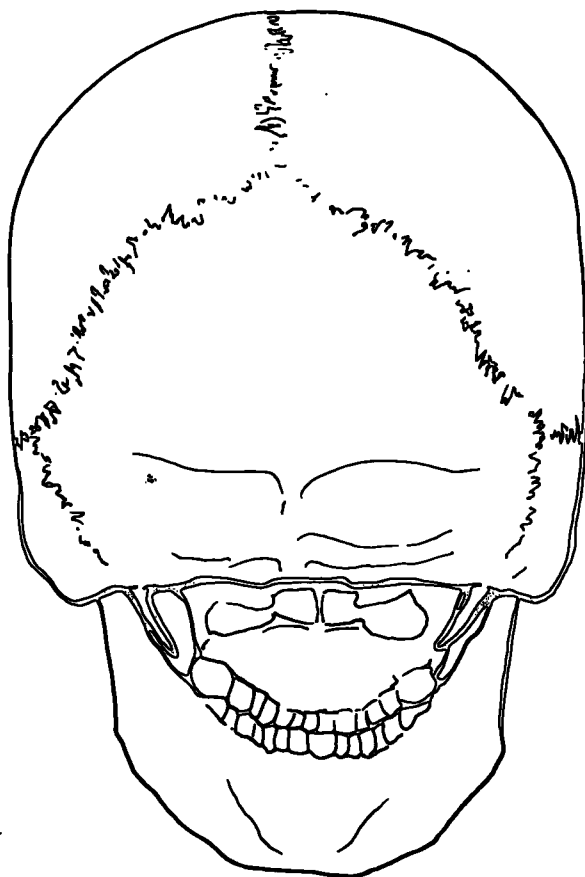
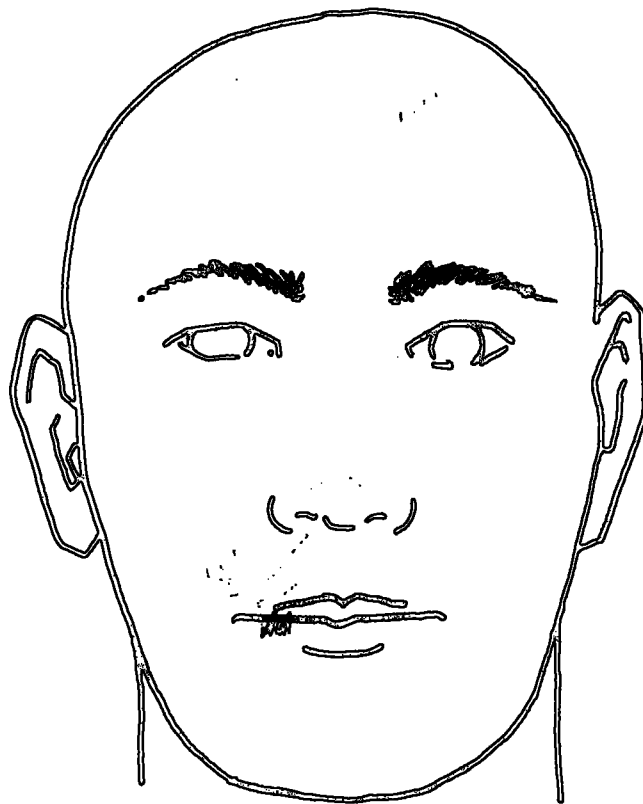
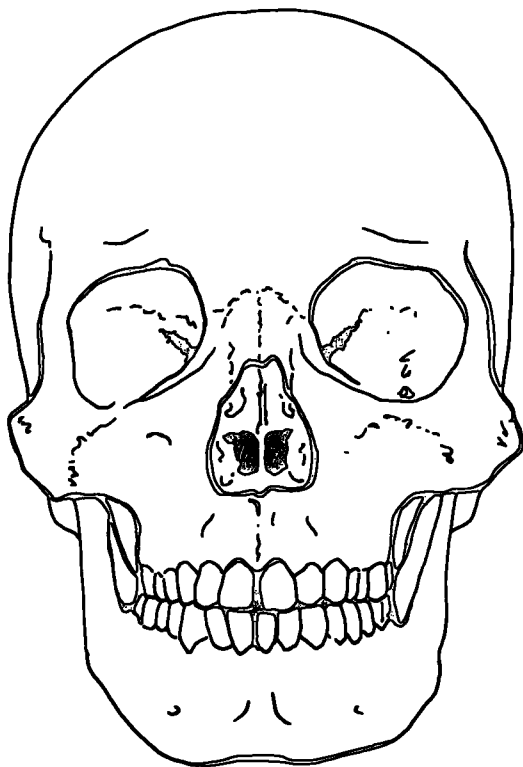


Head and skull: anterior and posterior views.

88-1055

Name _____ Autopsy No. _____

Age _____ Race _____ Sex _____ Date / /



CASE REVIEW J. H. DAVIS, M.D.

NAME: Grays, Sharmista ME No.: 88-1055
 Age/Race: 16 B Police: M PD
 Date Found: 4/2/88 Police No.: 0931053 M Schildbrack
 Coordinates: Bisc. Blvd 35 St.
 Site Character: Stairway of Motel
 Position: On stairs - anti-gravity
 Clothing/Cover: Nude Clothes in piece at foot of stairs
 Preservation Status: Good
 Photos Eyes: yes Few petechiae
 " Lips: yes Abrasion Rt side - lower corner Southern
 " Ext. Neck: yes 5 Tongue Neg
 " Int. Neck: yes Ecchymosis - minor under trachea, Petech expiratory
 Cocaine Blood: < .05 Brown .12 mg/kg
 " Other: Nasal +
 Alcohol: 5
 Other Drug:

EVIDENCE FOR HOMICIDE

ACCIDENT

Abandoned (body moved)

Unusual cocaine effect

Nude ♀

Witnessed to Suite + Suite
4 hrs prior

Sex Rectal Tear

Petechiae Epiglottis / Larynx

(But No witnessed event
documented)

Cocaine low level

WHO? →

Man seen with her has been
arrested for rape in the past

Is Williams
per Muenzfeld

Get F. A
report

Rape kit - All Negative

Already Classified as Homicide

- 1 88-3093 Black, B.
- 2 89-243 Spivey, A
- 3 89-906 Williams, A
- 4 89-997 Hernandez, B

Well preserved - not decomposed bodies

- 1 87-2006 Samuels, W
- 2 87-2017 Taylor, M
- 3 87-2633 Rozier, E
- 4 88-1055 Gray, S
- 5 88-3075 Edwards, E
- 6 88-3119 Lattimore, B
- 7 88-3575 Burns, A
- 8 89-323 Stewart, L
- 9 89-981 Gooden, P

Decomposed or insect altered bodies - including skeletons

- 1 86-2512 Turner, T
- 2 88-2596 Henderson, J
- 3 88-2637 Johnson, L
- 4 88-3118 Rolle, R
- 5 89-346 Harris, V
- 6 89-883 Bodie, C

Nov. 6, 1989

MIAMI-HERALD

88-1055

Suspect is linked to 19th slaying

By DONNA GEHRKE
Herald Staff Writer

Charles Henry Williams, already the prime suspect in the slayings of 18 inner-city women, has been linked to the murder of another: a



20-year-old who, like three other victims, was seen with him on her last day alive.

Sandra Jackson, only four foot eight and 84 pounds, was alone with six-foot-three Williams, a convicted rapist known for choking his victims, on March 23 after the two had visited with Jackson's cousin. Her body was found the next day in a wooded vacant lot at Northwest 13th Place and 38th Street.

Williams "was one of the last individuals seen with her alive," said

PLEASE SEE WILLIAMS, 2B

Convicted rapist linked to 19th slaying

WILLIAMS, FROM 1B

Tony Rodriguez, Miami homicide detective.

Like many of the 18 other victims, Jackson was found nude and asphyxiated in Northwest Dade, lying on her back with her legs spread.

Homicide detectives believe Williams, a baby-faced former maintenance worker, may be responsible for the 19 slayings — and perhaps more — because the methods of murder are strikingly similar.

"We've never had this many that seemed to fall into a pattern," said Dr. Joseph Davis, Dade's medical examiner.

Williams, 33, has been in the Dade County Jail for the past six months but has not been charged in any of the murders. He was charged with two counts of rape unrelated to the slayings. Metro and Miami homicide detectives say they don't have enough proof — even though he first murder came under investigation more than a year ago.

Williams has admitted to police that he knew some of the victims, but he has steadfastly denied killing anyone.

The slayings stopped once Williams was jailed in early April on the rape charges.

The first of the 19 victims — 18 of them black and one Hispanic — was found dead in July 1987.

Jackson was victim No. 15. The bodies of four other women were found before Williams was arrested in early April. Miami police did not disclose Jackson's connection to Williams and the other homicide victims until detectives recently gave depositions in court.

Jackson, a former cook in a sandwich shop, went by the name Sonia because she hated her given name. "She was my sweet baby," said her boyfriend Kirk Stevens, the father of her 2-year-old son, also named Kirk.

Like many of the other 18 victims, Jackson was a drug addict "doing tricks for crack," her family told investigators.

Just before her murder, she was desperately trying to break her

crack habit, said Vincent Lawrence, a distant relative who unsuccessfully tried to find a rehabilitation program for her. "I couldn't find anything free for her," he said.

On March 24, a man working in his yard found Jackson's strangled body next door in an overgrown lot in the Brownsville neighborhood. A brown coat covered her nude body. Her shoes were found nearby.

In the next 11 days, four more bodies of women were found. Two of them had been badly beaten and strangled, as Jackson was.

On March 26, the body of Angela Williams, 23, was found in an open field at Northwest 21st Avenue and 68th Street. The killer had beaten her face, breaking her jaw and teeth.

A week later, in another vacant lot at Northwest 23rd Avenue and 46th Street, children found the body of Brenda Hernandez, 24, whose chest and neck were battered like Jackson's.

Williams was picked up near the Hernandez murder site by homicide detectives a day after the body was found.

As in Jackson's case, witnesses saw Williams with Hernandez on the last day of her life.

Jailers later found scratches on Williams' back and fresh bite marks on his penis.

Metro homicide detective Joseph McMahon said Williams readily talked to homicide detectives.

Investigators said Williams told them he had been with some of the victims — but they were alive when he left them.

He said people in the neighborhood who say he is the murderer are picking on him. They didn't like him, Williams complained.

From canvassing Brownsville after the murders, police found at least two women who said they had survived attacks by Williams. The investigators and the alleged victims described the attacks in recent depositions.

One, an admitted prostitute, told McMahon that she had been raped and choked to unconsciousness in March by a man known on the streets as "Bumper" or "Bump."

McMahon showed her a Polaroid of Williams.

That's him, she said.

She said she hadn't gone to police sooner because she didn't think officers "give a damn about street hookers or prostitutes," McMahon said in a deposition.

The second victim said she was raped by Williams in the Brownsville neighborhood on March 18, six days before Jackson's body was found.

"She said at first he had grabbed her in a choke hold, putting his arm around her neck," Miami homicide detective Frank Castillo said in a deposition. "She said that he had her under control. She couldn't get away from him. The harder she would try to push away, the tighter the choke would get around her neck."

The two women pressed rape charges against Williams. He is scheduled to go to trial Nov. 13. But the trial is likely to be postponed for a third time. Prosecutor Dennis Siegel is planning to be out of the state that week to attend a seminar.

Meanwhile, police remain close-mouthed about the homicide investigation.

Williams' defense attorney, Howard Landau, believes homicide in-

vestigators are now conducting genetic DNA tests to see if they can trace back to Williams any body fluids found on the victims. The tests are usually done to connect rapists to their victims, usually through semen.

Despite Landau's objections, the Dade state attorney's office recently obtained a court order to take blood and saliva samples from Williams.

Miami homicide detective Rodriguez wouldn't talk about the genetic tests. "We're following up every avenue that's available to us that can assist us in these investigations," he said.

Rodriguez and John Farrell, Metro chief of detectives, said officers have pursued dozens of leads without the breakthrough they were counting on.

"Unfortunately, we haven't been able to put together anything of significance," Rodriguez said. "It's just a shame. It's a tragedy. I really feel that somebody out there saw or heard something that could help us solve at least one of these cases."

"Serial killers don't stop killing," he said. "They either get arrested, they die or they move somewhere and continue."

Coroner: Somebody killed 19 women

By ROSEMARY GOUDREAU
Herald Staff Writer

On a second look, the Dade Medical Examiner's Office has found a common thread in the mysterious deaths of 19 young Miami women over the past 2½ years — murder.

Medical Examiner Joseph Davis personally re-examined autopsy reports and photographs of the women's bodies and released a report Tuesday that says someone applied pressure to the necks or mouths of many of the victims.

The six-page report does not mention the two unusual theories his department had offered to explain the deaths: that a small amount of cocaine combined with sexual intercourse killed them, or that the women choked to death during oral sex.

The women, all black except for one Hispanic, have been found dead since December 1986 in outside areas of Dade — open fields, behind buildings, in the bushes. All were found lying on their backs with their skirts

pulled up or their pants pulled down, their legs spread apart. All were found between downtown Miami and Northwest 102nd Street, except for one found in Hialeah.

Initially, the medical examiner's office said the bodies showed no sign of trauma — no bruises, no needle marks, no signs of a struggle. Only recently did they suggest the possibility that somebody was killing them.

The Davis report changes that.

"It is my considered conclusion that the re-

petitive pattern of body position, location and scene circumstances constitute a reasonable conclusion as to manner of death — homicide," Davis wrote.

Only nine of the women's bodies were found soon enough after death to allow detailed studies of the skin, but seven of them showed "subtle evidence" of "carefully ap-

PLEASE SEE SLAYINGS, 3B

Examiner: Somebody killed 19 women

SLAYINGS, FROM 1B

plied neck pressure," Davis wrote.

Four of the nine showed "mild or moderate pressure to the mouth," he reported.

"It is not at all difficult to inflict enough neck pressure to result in helplessness and loss of consciousness within seconds," he wrote. "A weakened or unsuspecting victim may be fatally incapacitated with little or no residual signs of physical injury."

Davis did not return phone calls to his office Tuesday.

John Farrell, chief of detectives of the Metro-Dade Police Department, said his department is keeping "an open mind" about the deaths since no specific cause has been rendered. His department has always investigated the cases as though they were homicides, he said.

"There's a lot of this we don't understand and we don't have the answers," Farrell said. "Davis is saying, 'It's my feeling this is homicide, and I'm the boss.'"

"He's not saying that absolutely,

this is the way these women were killed. He's talking about subtle evidence. . . . Anything is possible, but you're not doing this in some clinical situation where the exact pressure points will be touched. These are live people, streetwise people. We have still not established a very specific manner of death," he said.

Farrell isn't ready to dismiss the theory that a small amount of cocaine combined with sexual stimulation killed some of the women. According to the theory, initially put forth by Deputy Dade Medical Examiner Charles Wetli, the combina-

tion can set off a fatal nervous reaction in run-down people who regularly abuse drugs.

"We certainly don't discount it totally at this point in time when we don't have other than 'subtle evidence' of injuries," Farrell said.

Still, the department continues to look for people with a history of beating up prostitutes or women around crack houses, he said. One of the homicide sergeants leaves today for the FBI Behavioral Profile bureau in Quantico, Va. The agency keeps a data base and has behavior analysts who might help investigators figure out the type of killer, or killers, they might be looking for.

Investigators have questioned convicted rapist Charles Henry Williams in with the deaths. Williams, held at the Dade County jail on unrelated rape charges, has a history of choking his victims to unconsciousness.

"The important thing is that the general public does not seem to be at risk here," said Farrell. "In most of these cases, it's associated with people in the crack-house environment. It doesn't make the death any less a death. It's important. But we don't want to alarm the public at large."

M. Am: H. v. v. v.
5/31/89

Deaths of 19 Prostitutes Pose a Mystery in Miami

By JEFFREY SCHMALZ

Special to The New York Times

MIAMI, June 3 — The circumstances suggest foul play. The bodies of all 19 women were found in the same section of the city in outside areas like fields, or they were behind buildings. Yet medical examiners said they had found no wounds on the bodies, no bruises, no scratches, no needle marks. Nothing.

For months officials here have been debating the deaths, which occurred over the last two and a half years. One assistant medical examiner speculated that the women, who the police say were prostitutes, may have died from the combined stimulation of sex and crack.

This week, Dade County's Medical Examiner, Dr. Joseph H. Davis, issued his formal determination: the women were murdered. He did not address whether the victims had been killed by the same person, but the announcement raised the specter of a serial killer preying on local prostitutes.

Dr. Davis said a re-examination of photographs and autopsy reports had revealed that pressure had been applied to the victims' necks or mouths. Aiding the medical examiner in his evaluation was Dr. Richard Souviron, an expert in forensic dentistry whose findings helped convict the serial killer Ted Bundy.

"One might question," Dr. Davis wrote, "how such deliberate deaths could occur in the absence of obvious injury patterns that we see in most homicidal strangulations and suffocations. It is not at all difficult to inflict enough neck pressure to result in helplessness and loss of consciousness within seconds."

Dr. Davis acknowledged that the physical evidence of murder was "subtle." And in defense of his finding, he in-



Associated Press

Dr. Joseph H. Davis, Dade County Medical Examiner, who has determined that 19 women found dead in Miami in similar positions and with no signs of violence were murdered.

Are they subtle murders or reactions from sex and crack?

cluded a discourse about how a medical examiner's conclusions were often based not on the body itself but on the circumstances in which it was found.

All the dead women, who ranged in age from 14 years old to 32, were black, except one, who was Hispanic. Most were crack users, the police said. All were found on their backs, with either their dresses pulled up or their pants pulled down; their legs were spread.

"It is my considered conclusion," Dr. Davis wrote, "that the repetitive pattern of body position, location and scene circumstances constitutes a reasonable conclusion as to manner of death — homicide."

But rather than create alarm, the Medical Examiner's report has been received warily. The Miami Herald did not even print the article about it on its front page. And police officials, while saying they are investigating the cases as murders, say they are not convinced that the deaths were really homicides.

"We're not discounting that there could be other explanations," said John

Farrell, chief of detectives of Metro-Dade Police Department. "As to the motivation of Dr. Davis, I think he was under some pressure in press releases to come up with a reason."

Skepticism About Report

Police officers say it is difficult to believe that at least some of the victims would not have struggled with the killer. They say serial killers of prostitutes tend to be the most vicious murderers of all, slashing or otherwise mutilating their victims, not leaving them unscarred.

The police say they have not abandoned the theory that the women died from the combined stimulation of sex and crack. While they acknowledge that the levels of cocaine found in victims were insufficient for an overdose, they say their experience with crack is that a small amount can induce fatal psychotic fits.

But the police also acknowledge holes in the cocaine theory. Two victims had no cocaine in their bodies. And with the exception of one, the deaths have all occurred in the same area directly north of midtown. If the deaths were indeed linked to sex and crack, why would they be limited to that section?

No Comment on Clues

In interviews some leading medical examiners elsewhere in the country cautioned that while they were not familiar with the specifics of the Miami deaths, they thought Dr. Davis' conclusions were plausible. The examiners said they were not seeing a rash of similar prostitute deaths in their cities and this led them to conclude that the sex-cocaine theory was probably inaccurate.

As for there being virtually no signs of trauma on the victims' bodies, Dr. Charles Hirsch, the Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, said: "It is not unusual for there to be no signs. It is perfectly consistent with a sound evaluation of cases like this to consider history and circumstances. Sometimes that's about all you have to go on."

The police would not comment on what physical evidence had been found at the death scenes — whether, for example, they had found hairs from the killer or fingerprints. They have questioned at least two men but have not brought charges.

Meanwhile, police officers have been warning black prostitutes to be wary. They say that, in addition to the deaths, crack use has brought about an overall increase in brutality against prostitutes.

The prostitutes' reaction has been fatalistic.

Chief Farrell said: "They tell us, 'you're not a user, you don't understand the high.' They tell us to leave them alone."

CASE REVIEW
J. H. DAVIS, M.D.

NAME Gray, Shannon M.E. No. 88-1055
AGE/RACE 16 B/F POLICE MPD
DATE FOUND 4/2/88 POLICE NUMBER 931553 141
COORDINATES Base Blvd NW 35° 2' DETECTIVE Schmidt
SITE CHARACTER STAIRS (MOTEL)
POSITION
CLOTHING/COVER None, clothes
PRESERVATION STATUS 4/2/88
PHOTOS: Eyes Photographed
Lips Photographed
Ext. Neck Yes
Int. Neck Yes Petechiae None
BITE MARKS (if Applicable)
OTHER PERTINENT MARKS

INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

SUBSEQUENT CLASSIFICATION

INJURY of Above NOT PHOTOGRAPHED:

COCAINE - BLOOD < .05

- Other Brown .12 Green .06

Alcohol -

Other Drug -

Rape kit status

EVIDENCE FOR

HOMICIDE

NON-HOMICIDE

< .05

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133
TELEPHONE (305) 545-2400
FAX (305) 545-2418

CASE INFORMATION

DATE May 9 1993
mo. day yr.

M.A.M. - Herald
time

88-1055
84-2927
M.E. Case #

Suspect in murder of prostitutes speaks out

Says police story is pure fiction

By JOHN DONNELLY
Herald Staff Writer

The two opposites of Miami's strangest multiple homicide investigation, the case of Charles Henry Williams:

Williams insists he was a sex-crazed crackhead. Period. Nothing more.

Police insist he was a sex-crazed crackhead — who raped and choked to death as many as 32 women in Dade County in the 1980s.

In his first interview since police locked him up four years ago for rape, Williams said a few days ago that the police story is pure fiction.

"I'm a target so they can say they have a serial killer," he said in a white cinder-block holding pen at Dade County Jail, his hands and feet in chains. "People don't know the whole story about me. I want a fair shake. I shouldn't ever have been considered a serial killer."

But what about the physical evidence against him, his admission to having sex with "three or four" of the victims in the final hours of their lives and witnesses placing him with six of the women?

Williams implied someone else killed the 32 — and he knows who.

Who? He smiles. "The worst

PLEASE SEE WILLIAMS, 5B

Murder suspect: Police story is fiction

WILLIAMS, FROM 1B

thing for a person that is doing time is to be a snitch," he said. "If you snitch and it's publicized, you are not safe."

Prosecutor Susan Dannelly: "That's an interesting theory. Would I put any credence in it? Absolutely none."

Williams, 37, ex-bus mechanic, inmate No. 9293245, housed alone in a safety cell in Dade County Jail, already sentenced to 40 years for rape, faces the electric chair in one of the 32 murders.

If you use the authorities' count — and they haven't proved it — Charles Williams would go down as South Florida's most notorious serial killer. Worse than Jerry Frank Townsend, a mentally retarded carnival worker who confessed in 1980 to killing 23 women, most of them in Broward. Worse than Eddie Lee Mosley, also mentally retarded, suspected of killing nine women in Fort Lauderdale in the 1980s.

Almost all of the 32 women were black hookers who had been raped, strangled and left half-nude lying on their backs with their legs spread open. They were found in inner-city lots, abandoned fields, a motel stairwell, a meter room, a crack house, next to a Dumpster.

For several years, largely because of a wrong theory on the cause of death, hardly anyone figured a serial killer was on the loose. A pathologist in the Dade medical examiner's office believed that cocaine — combined with sexual intercourse — killed them.

But one victim died without a trace of cocaine. That's when police asked Medical Examiner Joseph Davis to personally review and re-examine autopsy reports. From the photographs of the bodies and tissue, Davis detected tiny bruises on the women's necks, and he linked the cases to the work of a murderer.

Police homed in on Williams. On his long rap sheet: seven rape accusations, four unproved. But several women charged that he choked them during the alleged attacks.

"All 32 cases fit Williams'" modus operandi, said Miami police Sgt. Tony Rodriguez, the city's lead investigator in the serial murder investigation. "We just have more evidence on some than others."

Or, enough evidence to prosecute him in one. That evidence is substantial.

In the 1984 asphyxiation of Patricia Johnson, 19, lab scientists recently matched Williams' genetic code to semen taken from Johnson's body. A forensic dentist, using dental records, linked a bite mark on Johnson's right breast to Williams' teeth. Williams has denied having sex with Johnson.

Prosecutor Dannelly is confident of her case. Told about Williams' interview, she asked if he had confessed. Told no, she said, "We don't need it anyway."

Williams' attorney, Leon Rolle of Miami, couldn't be reached for comment. The murder trial, originally scheduled for Monday, probably won't begin until fall to give Rolle time to prepare.

But Williams didn't want to wait until then. Keeping quiet, he said, hasn't done him any good. There's his 40-year prison sentence for a rape conviction in 1990, which is on appeal.

There's the upcoming Patricia Johnson murder trial and perhaps multiple murder cases.

And there's the effect of his reputation on his three children, who he said were being confronted by relatives of victims. "They say

nasty things like 'Hey, your daddy killed my mother or my aunt.' What I'm trying to do is clear my name for their sakes."

On the night of April 14, Williams called radio station WEDR-FM during a teen talk program on crime.

Identifying himself as a prisoner suspected of killing 32 women, Williams told listeners that "once you got into the system, the penal system, the justice system, it was a difficult situation. It wasn't anything like how it was dramatized in the movies," said program host James Thomas.

When The Miami Herald asked for an interview, he agreed immediately — not seeking the advice of his lawyer.

Williams, an inmate with long fingers, long nails and smooth palms, sports a stubble of a goatee. Wearing prison-issue red pants, an unbuttoned red shirt, white T-shirt, a gold stud earring in his left ear and a white stretch cap that was knotted at the crown of his head, he rattled on for two hours about everything from nitty-gritty details in his cases to jail life.

He is one of six children raised solely by his mother, a cafeteria worker, "the only one in my family who stands by me now." He grew up in the Brownsville section of Miami. He graduated from Miami Jackson High School in 1975.

After high school? "I went to jail," he said. Of the seven rape accusations, three were not prosecuted, one ended in an acquittal, and three led to convictions. In a 1986 series on career criminals, The Herald profiled Williams. Miami police detective William Hames then called Williams a pro at beating the system, knowing "what he can say and what he can't say."

This is what Williams says about the murder cases:

"First of all, I admitted to police that I knew some of the victims. That was my first mistake. . . . The police, the state attorney, everybody, they want a serial killer so it can be the first time they got a black person besides Wayne Williams that they can say is a serial killer."

Wayne Williams, no relation, is the convicted killer in the high-publicity Atlanta child murders. Prosecutors got him on two. He is suspected in 22 more.

"I did a lot of reading about his case. I watched the TV and everything. But you see he admitted that he killed one of those people. I ain't admitted that I killed no one. See what I'm saying?"

Instead, he said he attempted to explain to police what his life was like on the streets. He worked for the county as a bus mechanic and later as a kitchen worker at Coral Gables Hospital.

And for a while, in the mid-1980s, he sought to change his life with religion. "But I found myself sitting in church admiring the young ladies, and that takes your mind off the Bible. I went back to the world, started to do drugs and going around with women."

He said he was straight with women about his intentions. He credited a court-ordered sex offenders program for that.

For example: "If a young lady says to me, 'You got drugs?' the first thing I tell them is that I don't need no problems. I explain to them I've been to jail for rape before."

He said he repeated this line over and over to women — to many of the "200 to 300" women to whom he made his drugs-for-sex deals from 1984 to 1989.

"What I tried to explain to police, if I had the drugs and I had the money, what motive did I have to kill females? Because if I had my drugs, I'm going to get my sex first, see what I'm saying. That's the way the gang goes in the community dealing with sex and drugs. If the person wants the drugs, they got to give, too. I admitted to them I had sex with three or four, but I didn't have no motive to

kill them because they got what they wanted, I got what I wanted."

He talked at length about only one murder case, one in which he isn't even charged — the April 2, 1988, killing of Sharmanita Grays, 16, at the Bay Point Motel, 3530 Biscayne Blvd. Grays was Williams' neighbor.

"She was an attractive young lady. She was dating a friend of mine," Williams said. "She asked me if I could rent a room for her."

He agreed. At the motel, Williams, Grays and Grays' friend Aida Rodriguez rolled marijuana joints. Williams asked Rodriguez to go out for cigarettes. At the motel, Williams said, he sprinkled crack with the marijuana and the two smoked it.

"When the Spanish girl came back, I didn't open the door. She [Sharmanita] told me not to open the door. She didn't want her friend to see her smoking crack." Rodriguez told police that Williams was perspiring and acting strangely.

"I went to run an errand, checking on more drugs," Williams said. "I got some more drugs and went back" only to find the door locked. A manager opened the door. Grays was asleep. Williams wanted money for the drugs and Grays told him to come back later, Williams said.

"When I came back, wasn't nobody in the room, so I laid back, snorted coke, watched TV, dozed off and police came knocking on the door."

Just outside the door, Grays' mostly nude body was found in a stairwell.

So who killed Sharmanita Grays? And who killed the other 31?

Williams answers indirectly. "If I see you kill this person one night we're together, if I didn't tell it then, the law says I can be charged with accessory to murder. . . . I'd be getting the same amount of time. And another thing, if I tell you 'OK, I know who killed so and so and I know what happened,' and if that person has never been arrested beside auto theft or simple crime, . . . that guy will say I didn't commit the crime. And you know what they are going to do: prosecute me. My word won't be no good."

He said that since he has been locked up, three or four other prostitutes have been murdered in similar fashion to the 32 homicides.

"It happens all the time, and it's going to happen again," Williams said. "I'm not the killer."

Miami's Sgt. Rodriguez: "What really distinguishes serial killers are types of ritualism. That is very, very distinct, like a personality trait. There is nothing more that tells about a person's behavior than an extensive crime scene, or a series of murders. There is a specific profile with Charles Williams. We've looked at the other cases, and we do not believe they are connected to the 32."

Rodriguez didn't want to spell out the difference. Williams challenges police to say why they are different.

In jail, Williams reads law books and thinks about the appeal for his rape case. In the interview, he talked at length about discrediting some of the witnesses who testified in the rape trial, but he always returned to the murder cases.

For one thing, he worries about his legal representation. Williams said he hasn't seen Rolle, retained by the public defender's office, since late January. "I don't think I can put my life on the line with him," he said.

His life on the line. For Williams, that is a constant thought.

"I ran into a brother of one of the victims on the inside. He could have hurt me. I was lifting weights. He came up behind me, and he could have easily dropped some of the weights on me or could have stabbed me."

"But he said he had talked to his mama. And his mama told him, 'Let the court handle it.'"



Williams

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133
(305) 545-2400

CASE INFORMATION

DATE _____
mo. day yr.

time _____

88-1055
M.E. Case #

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1989

THE MIAMI HERALD

SECTION B

Dead women had links to rapist

By DONNA GEHRKE
Herald Staff Writer

Where Charles Henry Williams went, women died.

Four were killed near his family home in Overtown. A fifth was a neighbor. Four more died in a North Dade prostitution zone where the tall baby-faced 32-year-old used to wander. Two others were found just outside the area. And two were murdered in a Brownsville neighborhood where he used to smoke crack.

Williams tells police it's coincidence.

Homicide detectives think it's a pattern.

Police say the convicted rapist is a suspect in these 13 slayings and five others, which date back more than two years. They called a press conference 2½ months ago to announce their suspicion. But they haven't yet charged



Convicted rapist Charles Henry Williams, left, says connections to the dead women are a coincidence. Police see a pattern, but they haven't charged Williams with murder.

Williams with murder.

The killings stopped once Williams was jailed last April on two unrelated rape charges.

"He's the best thing we've got," said Metro homicide Sgt. Frank Wesolowski, who

heads his department's investigation into 11 of the deaths. "He is the No. 1 suspect."

In recent weeks, The Herald has found more links to Williams and the deaths. Court records and interviews with police, witnesses and victims' families show:

■ At least three victims were seen with Williams on the day they died.

■ Two women who pressed the current rape charges against Williams say he tried to choke them to death in Brownsville — the same neighborhood where two victims died, within the same few weeks.

■ Another woman filed attempted-murder charges against Williams for a choking attack just hours after she had introduced him to one of her friends — who later was found murdered.

■ Williams frequented the same places — a crack den, a prostitution zone — that several of the victims did.

Williams is scheduled to go to trial next week on the two rape charges. The trial might

PLEASE SEE WILLIAMS, 3B

3 victims were seen with rapist the day they died

WILLIAMS, FROM 1B

be postponed to give Williams' new court-appointed attorney, Howard Landau, a chance to prepare a defense.

Landau, who helped win an acquittal for Williams in a 1986 rape trial, won't comment on the case or the homicide investigation. Nor will he allow his client to speak to The Herald.

In statements to police, Williams has denied killing the women.

Born in Georgia, he grew up in a neatly kept Overtown townhouse with his mother, brother and sisters.

By 1986, he had been accused of seven rapes — including assaults on two 15-year-old schoolgirls — and was profiled in The Herald as a career criminal who knew how to plea bargain and beat the system.

His accusers describe the same modus operandi: He starts with sweet talk and suddenly turns vicious as he chokes his victims unconscious.

Two years ago when Williams was out of jail, young women started dying mysteriously in his Overtown neighborhood. They were found almost nude, their legs spread and no visible trauma.

Miami cops were puzzled. Initial autopsies turned up a new theory — later debunked by Medical Examiner Joe Davis — that the women died because they combined sex and co-



VICTIM: Brenda Hernandez was seen with Williams the day she was strangled.

caine once too often.

They were well-known in the Overtown neighborhood as heavy crack-users.

So was Williams.

"He'd say, 'I've got money. Let's get drugs,'" remembered neighbor Audrey Salles.

One of Williams' teen-age neighbors took him up on the offer in April 1988 — and was found dead hours later, said the victim's best friend, Aida Rodriguez, 17.

She said Williams offered her and 16-year-old Sharmanita Grays "some weed" when they went to the Bay Point Motel, 3530 Biscayne Blvd. Later, Rodriguez left her friend with a heavily perspiring, crack-using Williams who wouldn't let her back into the room.

That's the last time Rodriguez saw Grays alive. Her body was found hours later sprawled, legs apart and nearly nude, on a stairwell at the motel.

Rodriguez told Miami homicide investigators her suspicions. Miami police have since refused to discuss the case.

Since then, two other victims were seen with Williams on their last day.

In October 1988, Williams sought sex from prostitute Erica Edwards on the night she died near the hooker zone on Northwest 79th Street, said witness Beverly Gunder James.

She said Williams, identifying himself as "Tony," approached her on Oct. 22, 1988, at the Tropicana Bar, 1057 NW 79th St.

"He came out of the bushes," James said in a telephone interview. "He asked me where I was going, and I said to the bar. He asked if I 'dated' [slang for hooking], and I said no. He asked if I smoked cocaine and I said no. He asked me if I knew anyone who did.

"I said yes — Erica."

She said she then introduced him

to Edwards.

"I said, 'Erica, this is Tony. He seems like a nice guy. Be nice to him.'"

The next morning, Edwards' body was discovered in a nearby field. She had been dead for hours.

That same day, James told police, Williams grabbed her from behind and choked her. "He picked me off the ground and put a hook on me and I couldn't spring loose," she said.

"The man was on top of me," she added. "I was on my stomach."

A neighbor saw the attack and scared him off, she said.

Five days later — and after three more women had been found dead in the area — James spotted Williams at a friend's house near the hooker zone.

Metro police arrested him there on attempted second-degree murder charges.

He was released in early December after prosecutors dropped the case. They couldn't find James. She moved to Oklahoma soon after the assault.

Five months later, Williams was seen with victim Brenda Hernandez on the day she was strangled in an open field in Brownsville, police told her mother, Mercedes Hernandez.

The victim had lived just a few blocks from a crack den near J & J Groceries at 2656 NW 46th St. where Williams hung out.

Two other victims, Barbara Ann

Black and Barbara Lattimore, hung out at the same crack den, several witnesses said. "He liked the girls," remembered store owner John Ben-nett.

Williams was arrested at the crack den when he tried to run from detectives investigating Hernandez's murder.

While canvassing the neighborhood for witnesses, detectives ran into a woman who said Williams had raped her in the same neighborhood two weeks earlier.

She said she was initially fooled by his appearance. "A clean-cut guy," she noted.

She agreed to Williams' offer: \$10, two cocaine rocks and half a pound of marijuana for sex. The next thing she knew, he was choking her and forcing her to have sex.

"The man chokes you like he intends to kill you. It's not a choke where he's playing with you at all. He wants to kill you," she said in a

sworn statement.

"The look on the guy's face — it totally changed from that nice personality, nice gentleman, hard-working gentleman to a damn manic," she testified.

Metro detectives charged Williams with rape.

Within a week, Miami police followed with another rape charge. A woman from Brownsville accused Williams of choking and raping her in March.

Since early April, Williams has been in jail, lately in solitary.

"He's there for his own protection based on his notoriety," said Dade Jail Lt. Jim Wood.

Williams passes his days watching TV or talking to another prisoner — Charlie Street, accused killer of two Metro officers.

Williams has impressed Lt. Wood with his politeness and quiet demeanor. "He seems calm and complacent."

CASE INFORMATION

DATE Sep. 1, 1990
mo. day yr.

Miami Herald
time

88-1055
M.E. Case #

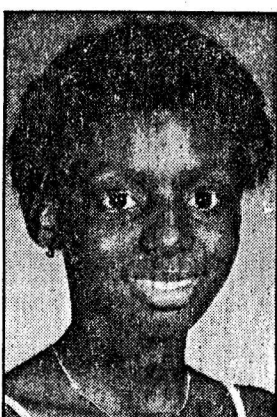
To her mother, Sharmanita Grays was a source of both joy and frustration. Then, they found her dead. Now, she's an inspiration to her sister and a sad memory for her teacher.

The Unfinished Doll



MARICE COHN BAND / Miami Herald Staff

SAD MEMORY: Lula Grays, with daughter Reytoshia, holds a rag doll that Sharmanita Grays made. On the banister is Lakeshia, Reytoshia's daughter.



SHARMANITA: Died two years ago after being seen with convicted rapist Charles Henry Williams.

By **TANANARIVE DUE**
Herald Staff Writer

Tucked on a shelf in Lula Grays' closet is a sweetly smiling brown rag doll with black yarn for hair. Grays used to keep the doll on her bed. Her middle daughter, Sharmanita, 16, made it for her.

But the doll has been in the closet since Sharmanita died two years ago. Grays keeps other remnants of Sharmanita's short life hidden there, too — photographs, newspaper clippings about her murder.

"It's too hard to keep pictures of her around," says Grays, 41, an Overtown mother of eight, grandmother of 10.

Recently, at J.R.E. Lee Opportunity School, Joan Odom found another rag doll — one Sharmanita never finished — while she was cleaning out her classroom closet. Odom, who had been one of Sharmanita's favorite teachers, began to cry.

Her students asked her why she was crying, why no one ever finished the black rag doll, and she told them about Sharmanita.

The story of the playful girl with a bright smile affected many of them deeply, and this fall the school will display the doll in a Plexiglas case as a memorial to Sharmanita.

Lula Grays wants a message on the memorial. "There is no promise for tomorrow."

'Bumpy dead'

Reytoshia Grays, then 15, remembers thinking it was a day-late April Fool's Day joke the night her sister Harriette woke her up saying, "Bumpy dead."

Bumpy — Sharmanita's childhood nickname had stuck with her — had been found asphyxiated in the stairwell of a Biscayne Boulevard motel.

She had last been seen with the family's longtime neighbor, Charles Henry Williams. Williams, a suspect in the

deaths of up to 32 inner-city women and teen-agers, is serving a 40-year sentence for rape in an unrelated case. He has not been charged with any murders for lack of evidence.

Bumpy dead? Reytoshia had seen Sharmanita only hours before.

"Not my sister. I didn't believe it," recalls Reytoshia, now 17. "I didn't want to believe it. I didn't believe it until my brother went outside and saw the body and came back."

Sharmanita and Reytoshia, almost exactly a year apart in age, were as close as twins. They had been shopping companions, roommates, best friends. Sharmanita, older and adventurous, was the leader; Reytoshia, her willing disciple. Once, at Sharmanita's urging, the girls briefly ran away from home together.

Though Sharmanita was the favorite in the household, her relationship with her mother had been stormy at times.

CASE INFORMATION

DATE

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time

M.E. Case #

Sharmanita's unfinished life

UNFINISHED, FROM 1C

After the runaway episode, Grays got a juvenile judge to issue a curfew. She tried to force Sharmanita to go to school. When that didn't work, she sent her daughter to a 45-day program for troubled teens at Coral Reef Hospital.

Sharmanita's attitude toward school had nose-dived seemingly overnight. When she was 12, Sharmanita was enrolled at J.R.E. Lee, an alternative junior high primarily for students with attendance or disciplinary problems. J.R.E. Lee's mission is to provide a smaller, more nurturing atmosphere for students in danger of dropping out.

There, family and former teachers say, Sharmanita flourished for three school terms. Grays was so impressed with Lee's program that she transferred Reytoshia there, and later, a third daughter, Reynolva.

"When we were at J.R.E. Lee, I know she loved to go to school," Reytoshia says. "She used to wake me up. I used to go back to sleep and she'd say, 'No, we've got to go catch the bus. We've got to go to school.'"

Her mother: "The people there, they really got to her. They brought out a lot of good things in her, and they showed her a way of doing things she didn't even realize she could do."

At J.R.E. Lee, Sharmanita helped organize the school's first 4-H club, emceed the school talent show, co-wrote a play with a teacher and sold a few of the rag dolls she learned to make in Odom's class.

Odom's eyes fill with tears when she looks at sewing machine No. 2 in her classroom, where Sharmanita used to sit.

Sharmanita had organizational skills, speaking ability and cooking, singing and dancing talents, she says. "She was like a big bubble that just floated around this school. I just think in a lot of ways, she was a gifted child... She just had an artistic flair with everything she touched."

"Sometimes I try to close it out of my mind, yet she's always present. ... She had a real effect on my life, she really did. She stimulated me and challenged me as a teacher, because she had to be challenged. She definitely helped me become a better teacher. I looked forward to her walking through the door, because it was fun when she was here."

J.R.E. Lee staff members are accustomed to hearing about former students' failures and tragedies. Sharmanita was not the first battle J.R.E. Lee lost. But they say it was one of the most painful.

J.R.E. Lee's registrar Rosie Watson sums up the sentiment. "Sharmanita was the type of girl who could have succeeded. She had the potential."

The wrong crowd

Ask Lula Grays what went wrong with Sharmanita, and she answers right away: She hung around with an Overtown crowd that the family believes was involved in everything from drugs to prostitution.

Judy Oshinsky, a former J.R.E. Lee counselor who now has a private family therapy practice in South Miami, read about Sharmanita's death in the newspaper. Her fate, says Oshinsky, was as foreseeable as it was sad.

"She was very secure [at school], because there was a lot of love and it was a family," says Oshinsky. "She had to go into an environment that was overwhelmingly against her. ... There are thousands of Sharmanitas on the street. Unfortunately, we can't rescue all of them. Unfortunately, we can't rescue even a few of them."

Grays remembers struggling with her daughter during the worst days, when she was too old for J.R.E. Lee and no longer wanted to attend school. Sharmanita finally left home at 15. She lived on her own, taking

odd jobs — there was a stint at McDonald's, among others. Eventually, she moved in with a 31-year-old boyfriend in Naranja. Although she disapproved of the age difference, Grays says she appreciated his efforts to convince Sharmanita to go



MARICE COHN BAND / Miami Herald Staff

HAPPY CLASSROOM: J.R.E. Lee teacher Joan Odom, with eighth-graders Latasha Williams, left, Jon-Paul Hannon, Hans Perez, Denise Green and Oscar Parks. Odom taught home economics to Sharmanita Grays, when Sharmanita was happiest.



RAG DOLL: Sharmanita left this doll in a closet at J.R.E. Lee.

She was told, she was told, she was told."

Aida Rodriguez, one of Sharmanita's neighbors, was with her the night she died. She told police Charles Henry Williams offered them "some weed," and the three of them went to the Bay Point Motel at 3530 Biscayne Blvd.

After he smoked crack, Williams then asked Rodriguez to go out for cigarettes, according to her statement to police. She hesitated because Williams was perspiring and acting strangely. Rodriguez said she pleaded with Sharmanita to leave with her, but Sharmanita refused.

When Rodriguez returned, Williams wouldn't let her back in the room.

Sharmanita's nearly nude body was found on a stairwell in the motel hours later. Her body had been moved there after she died, the medical examiner's office determined. No one has been charged in her death.

Salina Kelly, 18, Sharmanita's best friend the year she was away from home, was stunned by the way she died. Kelly said Sharmanita was not living a wild life, she only wanted independence. Sharmanita liked wine coolers occasionally, Kelly said, but she didn't take drugs.

"I just don't even understand it," Kelly said.

The day before she died, the last time Lula Grays talked to her daughter, there had been another family spat. Grays was crying and called Sharmanita into her bedroom.

"She hugged me and she said, 'You know, when you and me was going through our little thing, I used to feel so bad. I used to feel bad about things I said and things I used to do, but,' she said, 'you know I love you.' And I said, 'You know I love you, too.'"

"I said, 'You're going to always be my girl.' That's the last time I talked to her, sitting on the foot of my bed."

'It could happen to me'

In May, Reytoshia became the second of the Grays children to graduate from high school — with honors, no less. Even though she had a daughter to care for — Lakeshia was born when she was 15 — the death of her sister strengthened her resolve to succeed. Reytoshia, who wants to be a nurse, will start classes at Miami-Dade Community College next week.

Recently, she spoke at an awards ceremony at J.R.E. Lee and told students how Sharmanita's death affected her.

"I thought it couldn't happen to me," Reytoshia explained later. "Then when it happened to one of us, I said, 'Hey, life, it could happen to me in a minute.'"

Says Lula Grays: "When she graduated, I was so proud. When she walked on that stage, it was like she graduated for her and for Sharmanita."

Joan Odom, the teacher, believes Sharmanita had intended to someday finish the rag doll she left behind at J.R.E. Lee. She had picked the fabric for her dress, a rust-colored calico. Odom thought about finishing the doll herself but decided it would be more meaningful as a memorial if it were unfinished. Her family and teachers say they hope it will serve as both a warning and an inspiration to other students.

"If all the pain I feel could be spared some other mother, then I won't say it's worth it... but I will say it would be like a ray of sunshine to me, to know that she was here and that she prevented somebody else, with her life, from going through the same thing," Grays says.

Adds Reytoshia: "The unfinished doll is like the unfinished life, the ending of her life..."

"I just think about her a lot of times. ... And I pretend like I'm talking to her, you know? I answer myself and pretend I'm talking to her because I miss her, and I really talk to her."

The unfinished rag doll is about 14 inches high, crafted from chocolate-colored cloth and brown thread. The doll has a torso, a head, arms and legs — but no black yarn for hair and no features on its face.

Still, anyone who sees the doll can tell it was made with care, and that when it was finished it might have been beautiful.

Cops: Rapist top suspect in murders

But no charges filed in 19 deaths

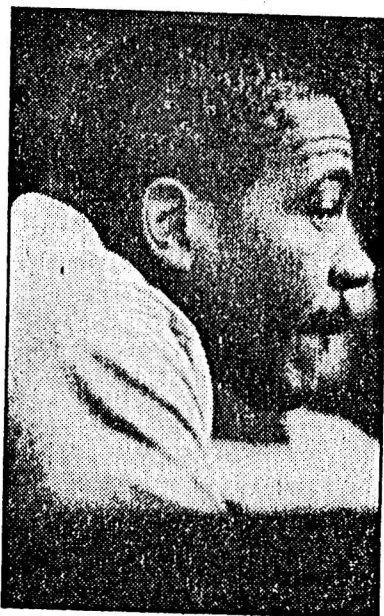
By **DONNA GEHRKE**
Herald Staff Writer

For the first time, Metro-Dade police confirmed Monday that convicted rapist Charles Henry Williams is the main suspect in some of the 19 inner-city murders of Dade women.

However, police still do not have enough evidence to charge Williams with any murders. "We've exhausted all leads," Homicide Bureau Cmdr. Wayne McCarthy said.

"It's not like anyone has left a calling card or footprint or anything like that," he added. "We're making every effort we can."

McCarthy said his investigators are looking at two other suspects. One is suspected of killing the first victim, Tammie Turner, who died in September 1986 while Williams was in jail. The other is a convicted sex offender, but McCarthy said his investigators are not investigating him as intensely as they are Wil-



CHARLES WILLIAMS: Police link him to some of 19 deaths.

liams. He would not disclose those suspects' names.

Investigators have said privately that Williams, 32, is their suspect for all the slayings but Turner's.

McCarthy said Williams "is a main suspect in some of them," adding he could speak only about the 11 cases his agency is investigating. Hialeah and Miami police detectives in charge of the others could not be reached for comment after McCarthy's afternoon press conference.

PLEASE SEE SUSPECT, 2B

Miami Herald
June 20, 1989

DATE
mo. _____
day _____
yr _____

Cops suspect rapist, lack evidence

SUSPECT, FROM 1B

McCarthy said witnesses have linked Williams with four of Metro's victims.

"He knew them or he dated them," McCarthy said. "Or he did drugs with them."

Family and witnesses have also tied Williams to the Miami homicide of Sharmanita Grays, 16, a neighbor of Williams in Overtown.

Since Williams was jailed in early April on two unrelated rape charges, no woman has been found dead like the other victims.

Williams has denied involvement in any of the deaths.

McCarthy said police have not ruled out that some of the victims died accidentally. But he acknowledged that the theory the women died from a lethal combination of sex and cocaine — which has been rejected by Dade Medical Examiner Joseph Davis — is "on the back burner."

burner."

Davis said Monday it is only a matter of paper work before his office classifies all the women's deaths as homicides. Some of the deaths had remained unclassified for months before Davis led his own investigation and concluded all 19 victims were murdered.

In some cases, the women had been clearly asphyxiated, he said. "You could stand 10 feet away, it's that clear," he added. In others, the bodies were so decomposed that medical examiners couldn't determine an exact cause of death.

McCarthy said his office is waiting for a written report from the FBI's Behavioral Profile Bureau in Quantico, Va., which will take weeks to complete.

After a preliminary analysis, the bureau told local investigators that the 18 deaths, excluding Turner's, appear to be similar and committed by one person.

CASE INFORMATION

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133
(305) 545-2400

M.E. Case # _____

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
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Rapist questioned in 17 deaths

Tuesday, May 16, 1989 / The Miami Herald 3B

Rapist is suspect in deaths case

SUSPECT / from 1B

found near where 24-year-old Brenda Hernandez was killed with a blunt object at Northwest 46th Street and 23rd Avenue.

Police took him into custody after he gave "false information" about his name and was found to be carrying a crack pipe in his pocket, they said.

Within a few hours of his arrest, Williams also was charged with the March rape and robbery of a prostitute. Another victim later identified the convict in a photo lineup as the man who a month earlier pinned her in a choke hold and then dragged her to an open field where he raped her.

Williams is being arraigned in those two rape cases this morning. He is being held without bail at the Dade County Stockade.

Meanwhile, Metro and Miami police are investigating Williams' possible role in the 17 deaths that began in 1986. Almost all of the victims were found lying on their backs, partially nude and in open fields or abandoned houses. Their blood showed traces of cocaine, and crack paraphernalia was found near by.

say."

Records show Williams served only four months of that sentence in the stockade. He was released in time for Christmas 1986.

Five months later, he was in trouble again.

Miami police arrested him in May 1987 after a woman reported she had been beaten on her legs, face and neck in an attack at Northwest First Court and 14th Street. She described her assailant, and police found Williams in the area.

However, the aggravated battery charge was lessened to a misdemeanor.

In the same area a day later, another woman said Williams attacked her. The Miami police report said Williams "had his hand on her neck and was choking her while the victim was trying to get away."

The attacker ended up stealing \$25 from the victim.

Williams was arrested, but those charges were later dropped.

He was out on the streets in time to be accused of a mid-May attack in 1988.

Choke hold used

building at 217 NW 8th St.

Police have never been able to find the man.

Witnesses were too high on drugs or alcohol to identify him, Watterson said.

Williams is suspected because he lived in the neighborhood at 921 NW Seventh Ave., the sergeant said.

Although an autopsy revealed bruises around her neck, medical examiners weren't able to detect trauma that would lead to Spires' death, Watterson said.

"There's no physical evidence," he said.

Today, Williams will be in court facing charges based on the com-

plaints of two women who told police Williams raped them in much the same way. He grabbed them from behind, choked them until they were unconscious and raped them in vacant areas.

Then he threatened to kill them if they told police.

Both identified Williams from photo lineups.

Prosecutor Dennis Siegel said Williams faces life in prison if convicted as charged of sexual battery with great force.

Three days before Williams was arrested and jailed without bail, the body of Peggy Gooden, the 17th woman to die mysteriously, was found at 9641 NW 27th Ave.

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133
(305) 545-2400

CASE INFORMATION

DATE _____ mo. _____ day _____ yr. _____ time _____ M.E. Case # _____

Miami homicide Sgt. Thomas Watterson also noted that Williams could not have killed all the women, because he was in jail when some of the 17 died.

Williams was profiled in 1986 in The Herald as a career criminal who knew how to beat the system. Although at that time he had been accused of rape by seven women and had been treated as a "mentally disordered sex offender" for a 1977 conviction, the rest of his cases had ended in acquittals or charges had been dropped or reduced.

"The alleged victims of Charles Henry Williams tell much the same story: The tall, baby-faced man begins with smiles and small talk; then suddenly turns vicious, chokes them and rapes them," according to the profile published Aug. 27, 1986.

"Each time Williams has been arrested," the story continued, "the 30-year-old bus mechanic with a soft voice and gentle manner offers the same explanation he will bring to court today: 'There was no rape. I'm going to beat this.'"

The day after the article, Williams plea-bargained on a sexual assault case to receive a 364-day jail sentence.

"He's very much a professional," said a Miami police detective who investigated one of the cases never prosecuted dated in 1986. "He knows how to manipulate it. He knows what he can say and what he can't

Attacker scared off

A friend of the victim scared the man off. The victim later told police she thinks she would have been killed if her friend had not been there.

Within a few hours, just three blocks away, prostitute Erica Edwards, 24, died — one of the 17 unexplained deaths.

Her body, naked above the waist, was found in a vacant field at Northwest 79th Street and Eighth Court. There were no signs of violence on her body.

Three other women died mysteriously in the area before Williams was arrested Oct. 28:

○ Barbara Ann Black, 25, was found Oct. 24 in a front yard at 7310 NW 18th Ave.

○ Barbara Latimore was found at 2700 NW 87th St. Oct. 27.

○ Robin Renee Rolle, 29, was discovered in an open field at Northwest 79th Street and 14th Court.

Metro police would not talk about any of these cases.

But Miami's Sgt. Watterson said Williams was a "good suspect" in the death of Anita Spires, who died Jan. 22.

Watterson said Spires' body was found after police raided an abandoned building for gambling and drugs. Spires was found dead five minutes after police noticed she was having sex with a man outside of the

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Authorities still have not ruled out that many of the 17 women may have died from a combination of highs from sex and crack cocaine — although Medical Examiner Joseph Davis said last week that the pattern of the women's deaths indicates homicide.

Sex offenders studied

Police have been scanning records to find convicted sexual offenders who raped in the inner city. Williams fits that description.

A Metro homicide sergeant recently theorized that the women may have suffocated from a penis forced down their mouths.

Forensic dentist Dr. Richard Souviron confirmed he had examined Williams' sexual organs about three weeks ago for bite marks and is trying to determine if there is any evidence that links him to the 17 deaths. Souviron and other medical examiners are also looking for signs of trauma or other traces that could determine if the women were slain.

Williams told Dade Stockade Lt. William Smith last Friday that he had been questioned about the deaths.

"He was worried about getting hurt if other inmates found out about it," Smith said.

The lieutenant said he could not allow a reporter to interview Williams until a public defender is appointed to represent him. The public defender's office said Williams should be assigned an attorney to day at the arraignment.

Metro detectives chief John Farrell, who has helped direct the investigation into the 17 women's deaths, was out of town and could not be reached for comment Monday. But he cautioned late last week that investigators were looking at several suspects and that his agency had no major suspect.

Tanya Folsom, a neighbor of Williams, said he grabbed her in a choke hold and dragged her to a bathroom where he cut her throat with a knife.

As in other cases where Williams had been accused of violence against women, he had been friendly, even offering Folsom some crack cocaine, she said in a deposition.

They smoked it in her boyfriend's upstairs apartment while he was at work and her baby was asleep in another room.

Williams left, but returned shortly afterward.

"I was like surprised to see him," Folsom said in the deposition.

"He grabbed me around the neck. From behind. I blanked out. The only thing I remember... I was trying to pull his arms but I couldn't."

The next thing she knew she was on the bathroom floor. "I saw the shadow of the knife," she testified in the deposition. "I remember him hitting me. I felt when he cut my throat. I jumped straight up."

Another man heard the sounds and scared the attacker off. Police later arrested Williams on attempted second-degree murder charges, but those charges were dropped.

So were charges brought against him last October by a woman who said he tried to kill her.

The police report said the victim was walking west on Northwest 80th Street from Seventh Avenue early Oct. 22 when she heard a male voice say, "Hey, lady, come over here."

As she continued to walk, she heard footsteps behind her. When the victim turned around to see who was behind her, the defendant grabbed the victim from behind, placing her in a choke hold," the report said. "The defendant choked the victim until she was unconscious, and then dragged her to nearby bushes."



C.W. GRIFFIN / Miami Herald Staff

LOST THEIR MOTHER: One victim was Barbara Lattimore, who left daughters Shantavia, 3, left, and Shadedra, 6. Now their grandmother is trying to raise them on a meager income.

18 killings leave families struggling with uncertainty

By **DONNA GEHRKE**
Herald Staff Writer

Fourteen-year-old Antoinette Burns jogged, earned a white belt in karate and went to movies.

Sharmanita Grays, 16, went out for cheerleading in junior high but later dropped out of school.

Barbara Lattimore, 22, had two young daughters and tried to care for them, despite her crack habit.

About the only thing the three had in common was murder.

They are among the 18 young Dade women who the FBI believes were slain by a serial killer who hated women.

After a preliminary analysis, the FBI's Behavioral Profile Bureau in Quantico, Va., has told local investi-

gators that the deaths appear to be similar and conducted by one person.

"No one wants to scare people, but we could have a serial killer," said Metro homicide Sgt. Frank Wsolowski, who heads the county's investigation.

Since main suspect Charles Henry Williams — a convicted rapist — was jailed in early April on two unrelated rape charges, no woman has been found dead like the other victims. Investigators say they do not have enough proof to charge him with even one homicide.

"We're still investigating everything," said Miami homicide detective Tony Rodriguez, who is in charge

PLEASE SEE MURDERS, 5B

Homicide victims' families left in limbo

MURDERS, FROM 1B

of the Miami operation.

Williams has denied any involvement in the deaths. His lawyer, assistant public defender Steven Potolsky, also said he couldn't talk about the investigation.

Late last month, Dade Medical Examiner Joseph Davis re-examined autopsy reports and photographs of 19 women's bodies and concluded someone had applied pressure to the necks or mouths of many of the victims. He is reclassifying the deaths to homicide — if they hadn't been already.

Police do not believe one of those victims is linked with the 18 others. The September 1986 death of Tammie Turner offers few clues since her body was found decomposed. But investigators said the death scene appears slightly different from the rest. Also, Williams was in jail at the time of her death.

The 18 other victims, all black except for one Hispanic, have been found dead since July 1987 with their skirts pulled up or their pants pulled down. Almost all had their legs spread apart. All were found between downtown Miami and Northwest 102nd Street, except for one found in Hialeah.

Medical examiners still aren't sure exactly how the women died.

The uncertainty has added more agony for many of the victims' families.

The family of Sharmanita Grays had to wait more than a year before Davis reversed an assistant's decision that the teen-ager died from a dose of sex and cocaine.

When Sharmanita was found dead in April 1988, her family told Miami police they suspected murder. A sister, Harriette Grays, said they even had a suspect — Charles Henry Williams.



C.W. GRIFFIN / Miami Herald Staff

WAITING FOR ANSWERS: Learlean Rahming, mother of victim Antoinette Burns, can't file an insurance claim without a completed death certificate.

Sharmanita had been with Williams, a neighbor, the night she died at a Biscayne Boulevard motel. Two witnesses, a motel clerk and the 16-year-old's best friend, backed up the family's story.

"The police never did anything. They never came back," Harriette Grays said. "They act like they don't care. They don't tell my mama anything."

Detective Rodriguez said he could not discuss individual cases, but he defended the city investigations as thorough and aggressive.

Harriette said her family saw Williams roam freely throughout the

neighborhood after Sharmanita's death.

"He used to walk around here. I couldn't take it. I just left," she said. Sharmanita was her favorite sister.

She had been a junior high cheerleader who dropped out of school when she joined in with the wrong bunch of girls, Harriette Grays said. "She was shaped nice, she jumped the best of the cheerleaders, she was a great dancer. She was a pretty black girl. A lot of people liked her," her sister remembered.

The family of victim Barbara "Rabbit" Lattimore also have suffered from waiting.



YOUNGEST VICTIM: Antoinette Burns' death was different.

They still have not received a completed death certificate, eight months after the 22-year-old woman was found dead at a closed drive-in movie theater at 2700 NW 87th St.

Missing from the form is a cause of death.

An insurance company is refusing to pay a claim until the cause is listed. That may be weeks more, said the victim's mother, Annie.

"The hardest part is trying to catch up on the funeral," she added. "It cost about \$3,000. Last month, we finished paying it off. But that threw us behind in our rent."

She said she also is struggling to

support Lattimore's daughters, ages 3 and 6, on an \$86-a-month welfare check the government provides for the two girls.

A social worker said the grandmother cannot receive more since she is already receiving a check for another daughter's six children.

Annie Lattimore said she relied on her daughter to help cook meals, clean house and tend the children. Even though her daughter was addicted to crack, she managed to be a great help, the mother added.

Now, she said, "it's hard on me."

Like many other parents, she believes her daughter was abducted. She was last seen getting into a car with a man.

Williams pops up in Lattimore's case as well.

He hung out at the same corner crack den where Lattimore went, said her sister Gail Griffin.

The sister, who called herself a friend of Williams, said he came over a couple of times to their home. She said she didn't know if Williams knew her sister.

Meanwhile, the family of the youngest victim, Antoinette Burns, is also waiting to receive a completed death certificate to collect insurance money.

She was last seen alive last Dec. 11 after she hitched a ride with a neighbor to go to the movies. She was let out near the Scott Projects. The next day, her body was found under a tree 26 blocks north.

"For a while, I was out there investigating myself," said her mother, Learlean Rahming. "I used to go out every morning from my house to Northwest 62nd Street where she disappeared. I tried to find the guy she knew. If anybody had seen her in the area. But nobody knows nothing."

Antoinette was a boy-crazy teenager who was trying to decide what school she wanted to attend, her mother said. Before she returned to her grandmother's Opa-locka home, she had been staying with an aunt in

a small town in Florida. Her family sent her there because she had been running with a bad pack of girls.

From the start, her family suspected foul play.

For weeks, they stubbornly fought off police and medical examiner's theories that Antoinette, along with many other victims, had died from a dose of crack cocaine and sex.

"I kept telling them that my child didn't do drugs," said Rahming. "But no one was listening to me."

"Walking to the bushes to have sex?" added Antoinette's grandmother, Thelma Rahming. "Not Antoinette. That sounds kind of strange."

At the funeral, they noticed that her lips were swollen "like somebody had hit her or something," Learlean said.

They also protested that Antoinette wasn't a convicted prostitute like some of the other victims.

Authorities started listening to the family when no cocaine was found in Antoinette.

That was the break some detectives needed to present their own theories that a killer was at work.

"It just didn't feel right," said Wesolowski, a veteran homicide investigator who leads a team of Metro detectives.

All the women's death scenes — many of them including torn clothing and missing shoes — pointed to homicide, he said.

"You get certain vibes when you look at different scenes," he said. "It's like when you're approaching a drug suspect who's wearing designer jeans, a beeper and gold jewelry. You just know."

Last week, both the investigator and Antoinette's mother were interviewed for the nationally syndicated program *A Current Affair*.

Although they've never met, their hopes, to be spread throughout the nation in the episode, were the same. They want to end the mystery.